

Minutes

Asheville City Council - Public Safety Committee

April 8, 2008 – 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Fourth Floor Municipal Building Training Room

Present: Council Members: Vice Mayor Jan Davis, Chair; Mayor Terry Bellamy
Staff: Jeff Richardson, William Hogan, Greg Grayson, Gary Cornett, Tim Splain, Trisha Hardin

- **Approval of March Minutes**
 - The committee by consensus approved the March meeting minutes.
- **DSU/Patrol/Housing Authority Monthly Report**
 - Chief Hogan provided a handout.
 - Crack cocaine seizures have increased compared to last year and powder cocaine seizures have significantly decreased.
 - Marijuana seizures have significantly increased compared to last year.
 - Significant seizures of methamphetamine have been made. Local seizures are down, but seizures of Mexican methamphetamine have increased.
 - There have been significant currency seizures.
 - Prostitution arrests have a deterrent effect on drug arrests.
 - Eleven robberies have been cleared this year with the help of the County.
 - Larcenies and auto break-ins in order to acquire copper and other salvageable metals have increased. Local businesses that buy and re-sell these materials are cooperating with APD to assist in the arrest of these individuals. State statute requires that a photo ID be presented when a transaction is made and also mandates disclosure to law enforcement when required.
 - Crimes and arrests involving guns have increased from 21% to 25%.
 - There has been one murder this year.
 - Asheville Claims Corporation has identified approximately \$100,000 available in Risk Management that, with Council approval, will be used to outfit over half of all police cars with video capability. There is an aggressive campaign state-wide to install video in all patrol vehicles. Prices have decreased over time and the new video methods are server-based rather than VHS. It was mentioned that drug suppression money could also be a source of funding toward this effort if it is available.
- **Ban on Sex Offenders in Parks/Child Predator Detective**
 - Captain Tim Splain provided a handout.
 - A list of known predators and sex offenders is maintained by the Sheriff's Department and this information is now able to be shared with APD due to

technology advances. With this additional information, offenders can possibly be charged with a felony rather than a Class 3 misdemeanor.

- Gang information is now also available to patrol officers due to cooperation between the county and APD with the assistance of a CAD records management system.
- APD is receiving fewer calls to Pritchard Park since the hiring of a park ranger.
- In order to increase coverage, the ranger will partner with park liaison Keith Whittington and will work flexible hours.
- Detective Anthony Johnson is still being trained. It is APD's intention to enroll him in an Internet Crimes Against Children training class.

- **I-Safe Event**

- I-Safe is a good baseline for education. There is a need to coordinate with other agencies and the community.
- APD is using volunteers who have an interest in this area.
- There is a desire to bring county schools into the process.
- APD will become involved in "Train the Trainer" activities.
- There is a desire to make Asheville an I-Safe community.

- **Fire Truck Accident**

- The recent accident involving Engine 10 has become known across the country through the "Firefighter Near Miss" program. Very positive feedback is being received by AFR about the firefighters being properly belted in and following city policy.
- There has been no serious collision involving AFR since the mid-1980s.
- The accident appears to have been weather-related, although all details are not known at this time.
- The truck was responding in a non-emergency capacity in accordance with policy and speed is not believed to be an issue at this time.
- There was major damage to the truck and it is believed that it will not be placed in service again. It is six years old and the desired life for a fire engine is ten years. The fair market value is approximately \$241,000 and the damage appears to meet or exceed that amount. A new engine will cost \$500,000.
- Representatives from the truck's manufacturer will arrive in Asheville on April 10 to thoroughly assess the damage and ensure the truck's safety systems were operating properly.
- All personnel on board were wearing seatbelts; therefore, the damage was limited to property only. There have been sixteen deaths in North Carolina involving personnel who were not wearing seatbelts since 1996.
- All proper procedures were followed after the accident and all personnel were drug-tested.
- A reserve fire engine was placed in service the same day so there was no lapse in service or lack of protection for the West Asheville area.

- There was no digital data recorder in this particular truck. Some trucks do have that technology and it is hoped that the technology can be added to others.
- AFR will use this incident as a powerful teaching tool. All personnel will be required to view the truck and have refresher training.
- The City's Risk Management department is handling all liability and insurance aspects of this case.
- The Committee congratulated Assistant Chief Gary Cornett on his outstanding interview with the media following the incident.
- Chief Grayson expressed his sincere appreciation to Council for their support of AFR by allowing staff to purchase modern and safe fire apparatus replacements over the past seven years. Council's support of replacing worn-out fire engines possibly saved lives in this instance.
- **Other Business**
 - Chief Grayson provided an April training schedule for the Fire and Rescue Department and welcomed the committee as well as Council to attend.
 - Holly Jones has withdrawn from the Committee.
- **Public Comment**
 - No public comment.
- **Meeting Adjournment**
 - The meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.
- **Next Meeting**
 - Tuesday, May 13, 2008 – 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm in the Municipal Building 4th floor training room.
- **Tentative Agenda for Tuesday, May 13, 2008**
 - The committee asked that the following items be placed on next month's agenda:
 - Approval of April Committee Minutes
 - DSU/Patrol/Housing Authority Monthly Report (recurring monthly agenda item)
 - Ban on Sex Offenders in Parks/Child Predator Detective
 - Public Comment
- **Future Agenda Items**
 - Adult Bookstores
 - Strategies for Strengthening Relations with Court Systems
 - Update on Pursuit Policy Changes
 - Civil Penalty Options with Prostitution – Council Policy Initiative (June)